

In The Claims

Kindly enter the claim amendments, without prejudice, as set forth below. A complete listing of the claims is provided, with a parenthetical indication of the status of each claim, and markings to show current changes.

1. (currently amended) A molten metal discharging device between a first upper container (1) and a second container placed below the first container wherein said first container comprises a ring shaped blade (15), fixed to the base of the first container around a molten metal discharging aperture (20),
..... a nozzle (19), inserted into said aperture with the lower end protruding from it
..... and in which said second container (2) comprises an outlet sleeve (5) the ~~lower~~ ^{upper} end of which is suitable for being coupled with said lower end of the nozzle (19), elastic means (9, 10, 11, 12) adapted to push said outlet sleeve upwards,
..... a cylindrical sheath (3) surrounding said outlet sleeve (5) and said elastic means,
..... gas sealing means (17) between said sheath (3) and said ring shaped blade (15),
..... wherein the cylindrical sheath (3) is integral with the second container (2) and said elastic means (9, 10, 11, 12) are adapted to react against the second container (2) so as to push upwards the outlet sleeve (5).
2. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein in the operating position of coupling between said first and second containers, said sheath (3) and said ring shaped blade (15) delimit a ring shaped gas tight chamber (25).
3. (previously presented) The device according to claim 2 wherein there are provided gas supplying means (21) for supplying gas to the interior of said ring shaped chamber.
4. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein said nozzle (19) and said outlet sleeve (5) are of refractory material.
5. (original) The device according to claim 1 wherein said blade (15) and said sheath (3) are coaxial with said outlet sleeve (5).
6. (previously presented) The device according to claim 1 wherein said elastic means (9, 10,

11, 12) comprise a helical spring which imposes a force in the axial direction on the outlet sleeve (5).

7. (previously presented) The device according to claim 6 wherein said spring (9) is coaxial with the outlet sleeve (5) and a beaker (10) is interposed between the spring itself and the outlet sleeve (5), wherein a force is transmitted by the spring to the outlet sleeve (5) through said beaker.
8. (previously presented) The device according to claim 1 wherein said outlet sleeve (5) penetrates inside the lower container.
9. (previously presented) The device according to claim 1 wherein said gas sealing means (17) between said sheath and said blade comprise a sand joint.
10. (previously presented) The device according to claim 1 wherein a duct of said nozzle (19) has a diameter inferior to that of a duct of said outlet sleeve (5).
11. (previously presented) The device according to claim 3 wherein said gas supplying means (21) comprise a tube which crosses said blade (15) and a ring shaped distribution chamber (22).